

MEMORANDUM

TO: DANIELA GARCIA, STATE REPRESENTATIVE
FROM: MICHIGAN COUNCIL FOR DEANS OF PUBLIC COLLEGES OF
EDUCATION
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO HOUSE BILLS 5598-5605
DATE: MARCH 13, 2018

Colleges and schools of education of the public universities in Michigan have a long history of supporting contemporary best practices in teacher education. This includes, but is not limited to, a commitment to extensive high quality clinical experiences (HB5601/5604), teaching of reading (HB5603), and robust curricula aligned with best practices as defined by programs, the State, and national standards (HB5605). We are required to maintain a highly qualified faculty who are up to date in their understanding of their discipline (HB5598) and demonstrate that we do so (Higher Learning Commission 3.C.4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development and B.2. Faculty Roles and Qualifications). All instructors and faculty involved with clinical experiences must have professional development aligned with that areas (CAEP national accreditation Standard 2).

Below we provide synopsis of our positions on the bills as written.

General concerns with the package of bills. The deans have some general concerns regarding this set of bills. **First**, the goals of the bills would appear to be more effectively achieved and implemented through administrative rule than through legislation. This would allow the specifics of implementation to evolve over time and keep pace with research and innovation as the priorities of the people of the state of Michigan progress. **Second**, it is not clear how the requirements in the bills will be paid for nor how accountability for these requirements will be managed. **Third**, we are concerned that the obligations spelled out in the bills may not be applied equally to all organizations

that recommend candidates for licensure. If these practices are essential for better outcomes for the K-12 students in Michigan, then moving forward we need to be sure that all teacher preparation providers are held to them, regardless of certification route.

HB 5598: 30 Hours of PD required of full time education faculty

Education faculty need to be current and relevant in their practices. The bill proposes to accomplish this through multiple-classroom experiences in the areas in which education faculty teach and interactions with diverse populations with whom they might not otherwise work.

As written, the professional development defined by the bill has a limited scope and does not include a full spectrum of opportunities for faculty to remain current and contribute to best practices for teacher education. Faculty in some subject areas may have to reduce the time attending to developing knowledge in their specific field to meet the requirements of this bill.

HB5603-HB5605 require very specific knowledge, for example in various assessments, social emotional learning, reading, etc. Faculty need the flexibility to participate in relevant professional development in their particular areas. University/college faculty teaching these courses are required to meet qualifications and standards as defined by both the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). As it is currently configured, we do not support this bill.

HB 5599: Teacher warranty

HB 5599 is intended to hold teacher preparation programs accountable for program completers who are found by their hiring districts to be ineffective.

Teacher preparation institutions consistently prepare quality teachers. Michigan Department of Education (MDE) data indicate only 1% of teachers receive ineffective ratings once during their first three years of teaching. Such a low number suggests idiosyncratic events, rather than traits of programs, contribute to low ratings. In addition, teacher preparation institutions' Education Preparation Institution (EPI) Scores,

issued by the MDE, include the effectiveness of their graduates as measured by their employers during their first three years of teaching. If an institution falls below an acceptable threshold, the institution is placed under corrective action by the MDE and must complete an improvement plan. Failure to show improvement in three years will result in the institution losing its ability to certify teachers. Accountability of teacher preparation institutions is built into these measures as well as into national accreditation, as required by Michigan law.

The warranty bill assumes that a teacher's poor evaluation is directly linked to the teacher preparation institutions. Research on why new teachers are unsuccessful indicates that failure is strongly linked to a lack of school administrative support and inadequate mentoring for new professionals. This bill does not take into consideration the wide range of social, emotional, physical, and mental health issues that contribute to ineffectiveness in any profession. These are factors largely out of the control of any teacher preparation program, except through the various partnerships that many of our institutions are developing. Existing laws require school districts to provide mentorship for all new teachers to support their practice and university-based teacher preparation programs, which could be effectively leveraged to help support those mentoring arrangements.

Rigorous accreditation standards, as well as other measures of program quality as evidenced by annual EPI scores, already ensure that teacher preparation programs prepare teachers adequately for beginning their professional practice. As such, we do not support this bill.

HB 5600: \$1000 stipend for cooperating teachers

Teachers deserve to be rewarded and compensated for the work they do to support student teachers, particularly if Michigan wants to broaden the pool of potential mentor teachers.

We recognize the dedication of cooperating teachers and their contribution to the preparation of teacher candidates. The student teacher and cooperating teacher relationship is often mutually beneficial. The partnerships amongst teacher preparation programs and P-12 schools provides a site for

development for all. Unfortunately, many of our institutions do not have the existing resources necessary to support this provision, which would require a shift of resources from other areas, most likely the extensive support provided in student teaching seminars. This would be detrimental to program quality. We do not support this bill.

HB 5601: 90 hours of clinical field experience before student teaching

The deans believe, as does the committee, that prospective teachers need to spend time in classrooms throughout their teacher preparation programs. Conventional teacher preparation programs currently meet or exceed this requirement. We support this bill, though some members have concerns with the cost involved with responding to regulation.

HB5603: 12 credits of reading with specific topics

Reading is important to success in school, careers, and life. Teaching reading is complex, and teachers need a great deal of support learning to teach reading well.

We agree that knowledge of reading instruction is an important component of teacher preparation. We are concerned with the constraints of requiring 12 specific reading credits. Reading is often taught in all content methods courses. We are concerned that the addition of six hours of reading instruction will remove this content from other areas. Changing the requirement to “equivalent of 12 credit hours” might allow institutions to attribute the reading instruction included in other courses to meeting the reading requirement.

In addition, expertise and knowledge of instructional practices evolves over time. Putting specific programs or pedagogy into law risks limiting the incorporation of best practice. We recommend removing specific curriculum and instructional practices and instead stating that programs should align their course work with literacy research on effective teaching and learning, such as that reflected in the International Literacy Association (ILA) standards, which are regularly updated. This is the kind of work that was done to create Michigan’s new literacy standards for teacher preparation and the literacy essentials documents from the GELN Network

(<http://literacyessentials.org/essentials/>), both of which were created in collaboration with stakeholders (teachers, administrations, reading specialists, community groups, literacy advocacy groups, and higher education) and would help provide continuity as individuals move from pre-service teaching to being classroom teachers. Teacher preparation institutions will be required to align their programs to the new standards, which are based in research. Criteria in this bill would support that work as well as require that the institutions continue to update their programs between revision of the standards for teacher preparation. We could support this bill if amended.

HB5604: Student teaching requirements

Some candidates enter the profession with limited experiences with diverse groups of students. If their first job is dissimilar to their previous clinical experiences, they can become overwhelmed or may be under-prepared for the settings in which they find themselves. Requiring student teaching to include working in urban and rural settings with a variety of students will better prepare teachers for future employment.

Changing references in the legislation from “student teaching” to “clinical experience” would allow for greater opportunity for candidates to have the breadth and depth of experiences we know result in high-quality teacher preparation and would address the aims of the bill. This would have the additional benefit of aligning with accreditation language. We support this bill if the wording is changed from “student teaching” to “clinical experience.”

HB5605: Topics to include in teacher preparation

Teacher preparation programs need to prepare teachers to teach in a variety of environments with all types of students. In addition programs must prepare teachers to develop and implement student assessment and use local evaluation tools to evaluate their students and inform their instruction. Finally, programs need to include classroom management.

We believe in strong, comprehensive teacher education programs that attend to instructional knowledge, content knowledge, content knowledge of practice and rich clinical experiences. These are topics that are included as part of teacher

preparation and aligned with Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards, the national standards in the field. Some deans have concerns with including curriculum in legislation, as this can be more effectively implemented in rule rather than in legislation. With that caveat, we support this bill.

Cc: House of Representatives Education Reform Committee members